

NEWSLETTER

JULY, 1999

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES UPDATE (JUNE 15 THRU JULY 15)

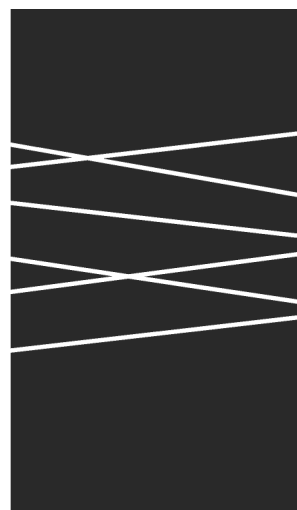
California Public Utilities Commission Updates

New Members Appointed to CPUC: On June 9, 1999, Governor Gray Davis appointed Joel Z. Hyatt and Carl W. Wood to fill the two vacancies on the five-member California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Wood is a former electrical technician and is currently a national deregulation coordinator and senior national representative for the Utility Workers Union of America. Hyatt is an attorney and entrepreneur. Both are expected to represent consumer interests on the Commission. These appointments came one week after the governor chose two staff members to fill these vacancies temporarily, until permanent appointments could be made.

Status of CPUC Response to Utility Representatives' Letter: As described in the April newsletter, representatives of several utility companies sent a letter to the CPUC on March 11, 1999, expressing concerns about the progress and management of the California EMF Program. Nearly every core member of the Stakeholders Advisory Committee and at least two interested members of public sent letters to the CPUC to express their views on the issues raised in this letter. Raymond Neutra, the head of the California EMF Program, wrote the program's official response. Program staff appreciate the time and energy spent by all of the letter writers who made their opinions about the program known through this process.

According to CPUC staff member Moises Chavez, the CPUC has prepared a memo responding to these letters, which they expect to distribute sometime in June. The California EMF Program will distribute this official response in a program mailing after it is received.

California EMF Program Report to CPUC: EMF Program staff have drafted a report for the CPUC on our recent activities. The current draft includes status reports on the EMF Program's many research projects and descriptions of many current and future Education and Technical Assistance Unit projects. The report also includes brief summaries of the Stakeholders Advisory Committee meetings that have taken place since 1996, and discussions of many of the important issues raised by the SAC during that time. The draft will be distributed for review by the core stakeholders in the near future. After stakeholder comments are received, program staff will revise this draft before the final version is submitted to the CPUC.



California EMF Program

A project of the California
Department of Health Services
and the Public Health Institute

New Department of Health Services Director Appointed

Governor Gray Davis has appointed Diana Bonta as the new director for the California Department of Health Services (DHS). She will begin her term in June 1999. Dr. Bonta comes to DHS from Long Beach, California, where she has been director of that city's Health and Human Services agency for over 10 years. A former registered nurse, her qualifications for this position also include a doctoral degree in public health from UCLA. Her experience in and dedication to public health should serve her well in her new position, and we welcome her to DHS.

1999 Bioelectromagnetics Society Meeting

Just a reminder: the 1999 meeting of the Bioelectromagnetics Society is taking place from June 20-24, 1999, in Long Beach, California. This meeting will include poster and platform sessions on many projects supported by the California EMF Program. The California Department of Health Services is also a financial sponsor of this meeting.

The California EMF Program will reimburse the meeting registration fees and expenses of our core citizen stakeholders who receive such reimbursement for regular program meetings. We have also provided scholarships to reimburse meeting registration and expenses for five California citizens who responded to our offer advertised in the April newsletter. We appreciate the interest and enthusiasm of the recipients of these scholarships, and we hope to see many of our stakeholders and others interested in this subject at the meeting.

New EMF Program Administrator

The California EMF Program welcomes Jack Collins, who has accepted the program administrator position left vacant by the departure of Rosemarie Maune. Jack has a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of San Francisco and has management experience with both private and non-profit organizations. Jack's B.A. in theater management reflects his passion for theater arts. His first day with the EMF Program is Monday, June 14, 1999.

Education and Technical Assistance Unit Updates

Fact sheets: The EMF Program's Education and Technical Assistance Unit has just finished revising and updating both the short and long versions of our general fact sheet on electric and magnetic fields, on which we have received stakeholder comments in the past. We are

currently formatting these updated fact sheets and getting them translated into Spanish. Paper copies of both the Spanish and English versions will be available from the EMF Program upon request. Copies will also be posted on our Web page in a portable document format (PDF).

Web Site: EMF Program staff, with the help of a professional consultant, are in the process of reorganizing our Web Site to make it easier to use and more able to accommodate the increased volume of materials that will be posted as our research projects are completed over the next year. We hope to post most of the reports that are produced for the research projects as well as technical and plain language summaries of these reports when they are completed. We will also post new fact sheets and other educational materials as they are produced. The Web Site will remain in its current format until the new material is ready for posting. We hope to have the new site online near the end of the summer.

CPUC Report Preparation and Assembly: Over the last two months, Education and Technical Assistance Unit staff have taken the lead in preparing the Program's progress report to the CPUC. In addition to writing several sections of the report, this unit is responsible for assembling and revising the sections written by other staff and formatting the report to be consistent with the previous one. A draft of this report will be released for stakeholder review before the end of June.

BEMS Meeting Preparation: At the Bioelectromagnetics Society meeting in June, the California EMF Program will staff a booth near the registration desk where information about our program and guides to the poster and platform sessions related to it will be available. In addition to staffing this booth, education and technical assistance staff have prepared a general overview of the program, our projects, and our materials. This information will be on a poster at the booth to introduce scientists and

June Stakeholders Advisory Committee Meeting Canceled

The tentatively scheduled June Stakeholders Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting has been canceled. The intended purpose of this meeting was to discuss the policy project software models and accompanying draft narratives, but due to the many changes and additions to both the software and the narratives that were required to respond to stakeholder comments at the January and February SAC meetings these products are not yet available. We now expect to release the models and narratives for stakeholder review this summer. We will schedule a workshop during the comment period for each project in which stakeholders and interested parties can ask questions and get clarifications from EMF staff and the contractors that developed the models. These workshops will also include time for participants to work with the computer models. We will also schedule meetings after the end of the comment periods for stakeholders and other interested parties to discuss their perceptions of the products and the lessons that can be drawn from them.

other meeting attendees to our work. Staff are also coordinating the scholarships, advertised in the last newsletter, that were awarded to members of public who need financial assistance in order to attend the meeting.

Other Recent Activities: The Education and Technical Assistance Unit is also working on creating new educational materials, including an updated program description, fact sheets and question and answer documents dealing with specific issues like EMF in schools and residences, and a plain language summary of the School Exposure Assessment Project report. In addition, regular responsibilities of this unit include responding to stakeholder questions and requests, answering questions on EMF from members of the public, planning for and coordinating the release of Research Unit project reports and materials, and planning and organizing both regular stakeholder meetings and workshops on the Research Unit projects.

Research Unit Updates

School Policy Analysis: Work on the final product of this research is in process. The development team is currently completing work related to stakeholder comments made on draft presentations of the decision tree and the final report. Preliminary results of the research project will be presented at the Bioelectromagnetics Society (BEMS) meeting in June.

School Exposure Survey: The research component of this project is complete. The draft final report has been delivered to the PUC, the stakeholders, and the peer reviewers, and a final report will be prepared as soon as the peer reviewers submit their comments. As requested at the February Stakeholders Advisory Committee meeting, an executive summary of this report has been prepared and will be distributed before the end of June. Final results of this project will be presented at the BEMS meeting in June, and the final report will be made available to stakeholders and the public when it is completed.

EPI Study of Spontaneous Abortion: All participants in this research project have been selected, interviewed, and had their exposure measured. They are being followed throughout their pregnancies, the last of which will end in August 1999. Detailed data analysis will then be done to determine study results. The expected completion date of this project is August 31, 2000. Work-in-progress reports will be presented at the BEMS meeting in June.

and The Public Health Institute

Power Grid and Land Use Policy Analysis: In response to stakeholders' concerns, this project has been developed to a much greater level of detail than anticipated. For example, both utility company and community representatives requested extensive scrutiny of the estimates of the costs associated with modifications of power lines. In particular, opinions differed as to the additional costs or savings associated with the number and the duration of power outages in areas served by overhead or underground power lines. Neither side could easily obtain data to support their positions, and several meetings were held to work out a data collection strategy, which is now being implemented. The Program has also contracted with an economist to review the cost justifications provided by the policy analysts. Despite such developments, the project is now nearly completed. Preliminary results will be presented at the BEMS meeting in June, and drafts of the decision tree model software and the accompanying narrative will be distributed for stakeholder comment thereafter.

Stephanie London Breast Cancer Add-On Study: This study is complete and data files have been made available to the EMF Program. Initial analyses indicate that harmonic content is not significantly associated with mean magnetic field strength. Other analyses will be carried out as required to assist in the risk evaluation.

Task-based Occupational Exposure Assessment Feasibility Study: The final product of this study, a computerized questionnaire designed to estimate a worker's exposure from descriptions of the tasks performed on the job, is now being validated on a set of subjects participating in an epidemiological study in Colorado. Some results will be presented at the BEMS meeting in June, however the final report may not be available by the end of the summer, as had been estimated in the past.

Epidemiology Workshop: At this workshop, which took place in January 1999, several epidemiologists presented papers on issues related to the possible health effects of power-frequency EMF, followed by discussion on each issue. The discussion periods were tape-recorded and transcribed and are now being edited. Most of the papers presented at this workshop have been revised and are ready to be submitted for publication. Fifty percent of the funds allocated for the workshop papers are being held pending final receipt and publication of the material in the *Bioelectromagnetics Journal*. Some results from this workshop will be presented at the BEMS meeting in June.

California Exposure Assessment: EMF staff are discussing with a contractor whether this project, which was originally intended to summarize and generalize the exposure data collected in California over the past several years, is still required. It is possible that these data sets are already consistent enough that no further data manipulation is necessary. Some special analyses of exposure “episode” data will be carried out by Dan Bracken under a contract with the program, however.

Risk Evaluation Guidelines: The first draft of these Guidelines has been revised based on the suggestions and comments received from the Science Advisory Panel and SAC. This new draft has been submitted to the Department of Health Services (DHS) for approval, and then will be released for public comment. Our timeline for release is dependent on the DHS review. The process used in the development of the guidelines will be presented at the BEMS meeting in June.

Risk Evaluation: This project cannot formally start un-

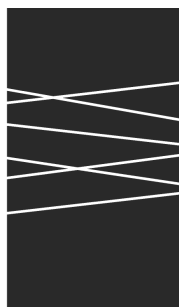
til the Risk Evaluation Guidelines have been approved. However, preliminary work is in progress. Contractors have been hired to assist EMF staff in assembling and reviewing the evidence that must be evaluated. A draft final report is expected next year. The final evaluation expressing the official view of the Department of Health Services will be released at the end of a full DHS review of the draft final report. The duration of this review is expected to be about 9 months, but is mostly outside the control of this Program.

Policy Integration: This project, whose purpose is to make the technical products of the two policy analysis projects readily usable by decision-makers and stakeholder advocates, will begin once the policy analysis contractors have submitted their final reports and the stakeholders’ remaining concerns have been identified. An important stage is the integration into the computer models of the best DHS estimates of EMF exposure in California and the credibility of the health risk evidence. These estimates will be determined in the DHS risk evaluation.

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